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*Research Article*

# Gender and Motivation among EFL Students

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## Abstract

Motivation is an important factor for explaining the success or failure of any complex task. Motivation is related to gender which plays an important role in one's life. This study focuses on finding out the correlation between gender and motivation among students in learning English as a foreign language. It looks particularly on determining how motivation in learning English as a foreign language is influenced by gender. The researchers employed qualitative research where the data were obtained by questionnaire. Ten participants of this research were chosen for this research. They are five males and five female postgraduate students of English Education Department of Syiah Kuala University. This research found that there is significant correlation between gender and motivation among EFL students in learning English in which female students tend to be more successful and motivated than the male students regarding learning English.

## Keywords

Motivation; gender; EFL students; correlation

## Introduction

In the area of second language acquisition, motivation is commonly discussed. According to many researchers, motivation has a powerful influence on both internal and external learning aspects. Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, and Ratcheva, (2012) say that motivation influence self-confidence, aptitude, intelligence, learning strategies' effectiveness, and some others aspects. Dörnyei (1990) also argues that motivation affect someone's success. In this case, during the learning process, different types of motivation may also vary between different age groups (Ghenghesh, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). It is generally agreed that motivation is beneficial for learning foreign language. According to Pintrich (2003) then Pintrich and Schunk (2002), motivated students are more likely to invest more time in their courses and complete their studies, whereas Vallerand and Bissonnette (1992) claim that unmotivated students are more likely to drop out.

Besides motivation, gender also plays an important role in an individual's life. According to Catalan (2003), gender as significant predictor in educational, psychological and linguistic. While Andreou, Vlachos and Andreou (2005) state that gender as one of the main factors that influence foreign language

learning. From that statement we can conclude that, gender has a pivotal role in all aspects of human life.

There are many stereotypes both male and female in motivation, for example Chan, Spratt and Gillian (2010) conducted a research on the influence of self-efficacy on motivation to learn English as a second language. Results from their research showed that language learners with high self-efficacy tend to increase their language more quickly and efficiently than others. However, the results of the latest study contradict with Chan et al.'s (2010) findings, it shows that male students who have lower self-efficacy than female students tend to develop their language by practicing harder than female students. They can drill and train themselves outside the classroom (Chan et al., 2010).

Both males and females have a different level of motivation in learning foreign language. Some research favoring more female students' motivation. In a previous research, the relationship between gender and motivation in EFL has been investigated for example, the work of Csizer and Dörnyei (2005) who argue that male students are less motivated to acquire the English language in Hungarian schools. It is clear to argue that there is a gap in research of motivation and gender. More studies are needed to discover the relationship between the two factors affecting second language acquisition. This study aims to investigate the correlation between gender differences and motivation in learning foreign language in Syiah Kuala University at Postgraduate Program. The findings contribute to the current body of literature on gender and motivation's relationship, particularly in learning English as a foreign language.

## Method

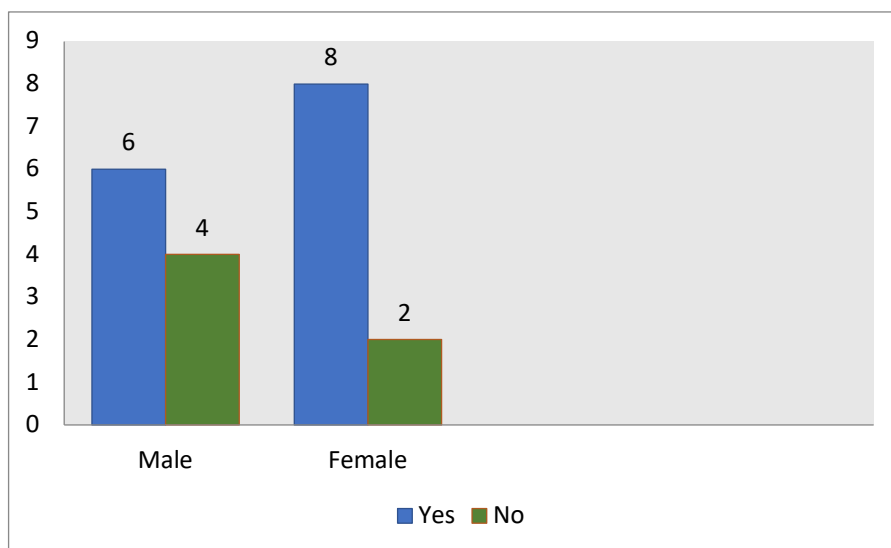
In collecting the data, we used qualitative way where the data were obtained through library research and questionnaires. In addition, we used the questionnaires constructed by Schmidt and Watanabe (2001). The questionnaires consist of 22 statements and 2 point scales (Yes and No). Students could choose one out of 2 scales (Yes or No) in the questionnaire given.

Ten students that consisted of five males and five females of postgraduate program of English Education Department of Syiah Kuala University were involved in this study to answer some questions in the questionnaires.

After the data from questionnaire were collected, then we analyzed the data through the Likerts Scale to describe the proportion of students' motivation in different gender.

## Results and Discussion

The result from the distribution of questionnaires are described clearly in this part. The researchers separate the results and discussions in two parts, namely: learner's motivation and the relationship between gender and motivation in learning English as a foreign language. Both of that part consist with some components such intrinsic motivation, language requirement, instrumental orientation, integrative orientation, interest in foreign language, competitiveness and motivational strength. The following, the writer would like to give detailed information about learners' motivation in learning EFL. The data shown in the Chart 1 below.



*Chart 1. The motivation between male and female*

Based on intrinsic motivation, there were 7 participants (3 males and 4 females) who felt enjoy in learning English language in Postgraduate Program at Syiah Kuala University. Then, 6 participants (2 male and 4 females) often wished that they could continue the English language class even though the class was over. Similar with that, 8 from 10 participants (3 males and 5 females) preferred to use English outside the English department class whenever they have a chance. The result of data showed that there were 4 male participants, who did not like English as their intrinsic motivation, they had other reasons in learning English. From this aspect, we can conclude that female students tend to have this intrinsic motivation than male students.

In language requirement, there were 8 participants (3 males and 5 females) who mainly studied the English language to satisfy the university language requirement. It can be said that only 20% from the participants that did not have good language requirement.

Based on instrumental orientation, there were 9 participants (4 males and 5 females) who were able to speak English language with reason to add their social status. It means that, many of them assumed that English can change their social status and make their more appreciated by other people. From the result of the data in the questionnaire, it is also showed that all of the participants increased their proficiency in English language to have financial benefit for them. Not only for male, but also female have same point of view in this case. While, based on the result of data, female preferred to learn English language to understand film, video or music in English than male, there were 5 participants who said 'yes' and 3 of them did not use their ability in English for this purpose.

In integrative orientation, there were 9 participants (4 males and 5 females), who claimed that English language is important because it allows them to interact with people who speak it. Then, 8 participants (3 males and 5 females) who learned English language to be able to communicate with their friends. Generally, it can be understood that being good in English communication is very important in humans' life.

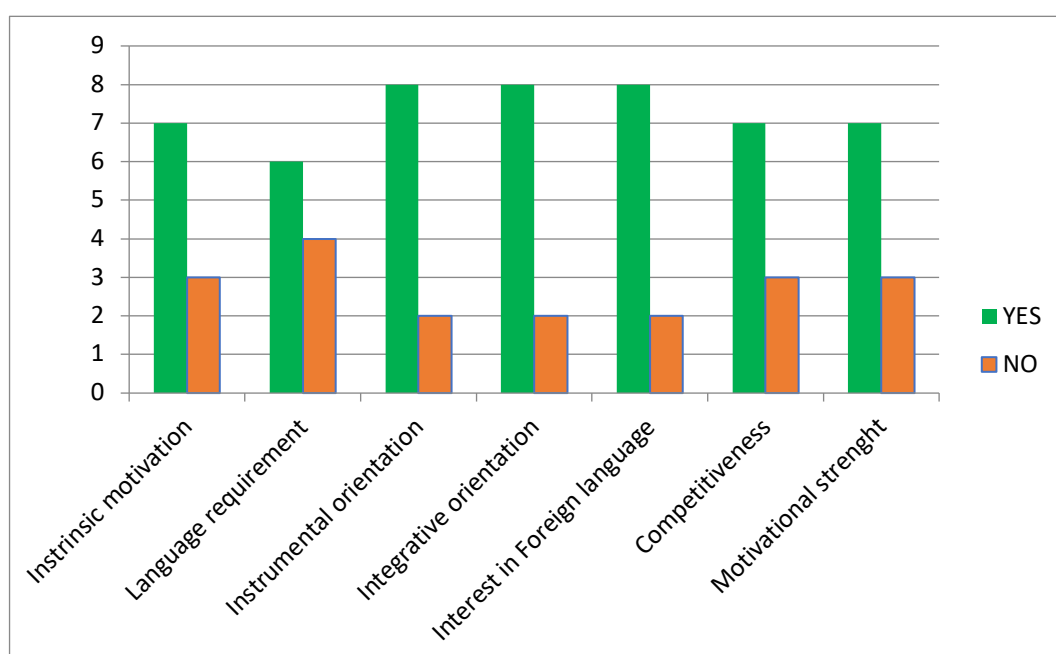
Based on interesting and foreign language aspect, there were 7 participants (2 male and 5 females) who would like to learn several foreign languages. According to the participants, learning several language is important for them. Then, 6 participants (2 male and 4 females) who claimed that studying foreign language is an important part of education. Also, the result showed that, 8 participants (3 male and 5

females) who assumed that English language is important to them because it could broaden their world view.

Then, according competitiveness aspect, there were 6 participants (2 male and 4 females) who assumed that getting a good grade in English Department is the most important thing right now. Also, 8 participants (3 male and 5 females) that wanted to learn English language because it is important to show their ability to others. In line with this, 8 participants (3 male and 5 females) who learned best when they are competing with other students and they want to do better than other students in their department.

Based on motivational strength, there were only 3 participants (male) that often felt lazy or bored when their study in Postgraduate Program at Syiah Kuala University. Then. 6 participants (3 male and 3 female) agreed that they worked hard in learning English in Postgraduate Program at Syiah Kuala University even when they do not like what they are doing. Besides that, 8 participants (3 male and 5 females) who either gave up or only studied the easy part, when the course work was difficult. In line with this, 8 participants (3 male and 5 females) who put their best effort into learning English language. Also, 8 participants (4 males and 4 females) who always finish their work even when the course material are dull and uninteresting.

From the result of questionnaire, it can be said that in terms of motivation that influences their achievement, males and females are not equal. Here, female students more motivated than male students in learning language as a foreign language. In some motivational components, female students showed significantly greater motivation such as in extrinsic motivation, language requirement, instrumental orientation, integrative orientation, interest in foreign language and motivational strength. While male students have a significantly score only in instrumental and integrative component. They have also achieved a larger score in interest in foreign language component, but this difference was insignificant. The Chart 2 below describes the differences motivational components between male and female students.

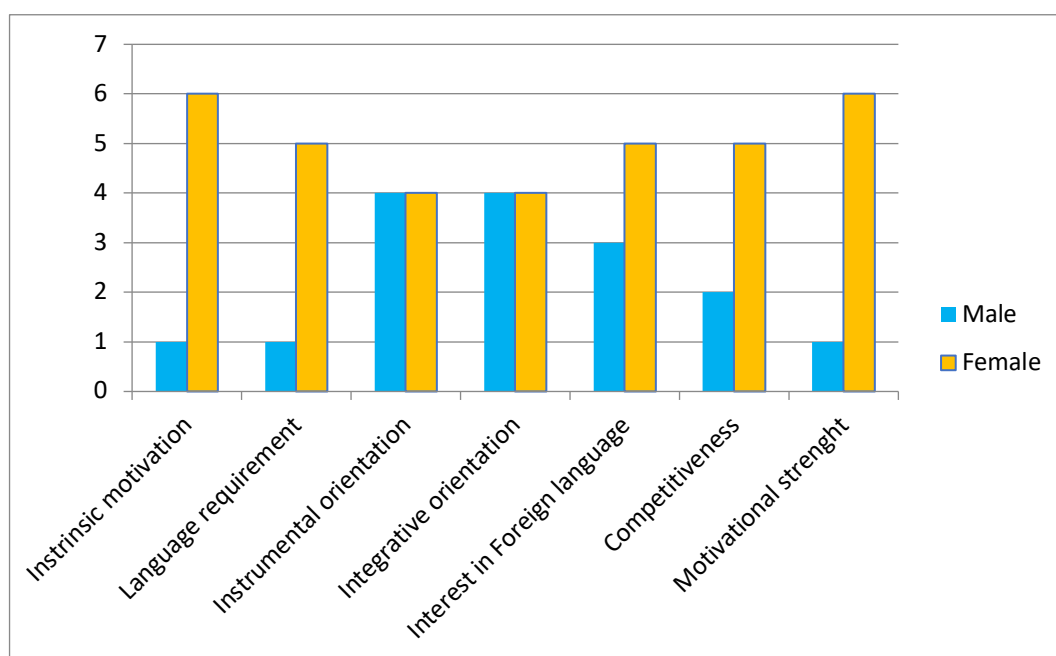


*Chart 2. The Components of Motivation*

As it can be seen from Chart 2 above, generally it shows that instrumental orientation, integrative orientation and interest in foreign language component are the motivational component both male and female interested in. While the other components such as intrinsic motivation, language requirement, competitiveness and also motivational strength has varied answer between male and female students.

To sum up, the students' answers show their motivation in learning English and its gender. Female students tend to be more motivated and successful in achieving goals at learning English as a foreign language and they have high motivation in learning English as foreign language than male students. The results of this research is similar to Balenovic's findings (2011). She also found that female students are more motivated and success in learning English as a foreign language than male students.

Then, the Chart 3 below illustrates the different motivational components between male and female in more detail. It almost same with Figure 2, in Chart 3 it describes about the specific motivation in learning Foreign language while in Chart 2 just give a presented in generally about students who expressed strong interest in learning English in different ways or components.



*Chart 3. The Differences Components of Motivation Between Male and Female*

Hence, Chart 3 clearly shows that male students has low motivated in learning English as foreign language than female. Especially for some components such intrinsic motivation, language requirement and motivational strength. Some male participant learning English as foreign language just for add their social status, as a tool to interact with people who speak English language, and also to broaden they world view.

Thus, it is evidently shown that there is relation between gender and motivation in learning English as foreign language. Different gender shows different motivation and also different purposes in learning English as foreign language. The fact that researchers found is female students' more interested, enthusiasm and attractive in learning EFL.

In general academic motivation, both males and females students are different. This is in line with Mori and Gobel (2006), in which according to them female students are more motivated to learn English than male students, which could explain their overall dominance in English (Aslan, 2009). Motivation may also be affected by the level of fear and apprehension about negative outcomes. The levels of fear and apprehension will be varying between males and female students, although female students likely to have more emotions than male students. In this case, female students work as hard as they can to overcome such fears and nervousness in learning English as foreign language (Saidi & Al - Mahrooqi, 2012).

This research finding also supports the arguments given by Saidi and Al-Mahrooqi's (2012) where male and female students are not equally enthusiastic and attracted in learning English. Females are more excited than males. Since learners' motivation affects self-efficacy in English learning, it has been shown that female students have more self-efficacy than male students. In learning English as a foreign language, there are may also have some other factors that might influence motivation and achievement for the students both male and female.

## Conclusion

In learning English as a foreign language, gender plays an important factor that influence motivation. There are different motivations between males and females students which is consequently influences their achievement in EFL. The results of this research shows that female students are more motivated than male students in learning English as a foreign language.

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